

Subject: DEAN MALENKO! takes on his older and possibly better brother JOE MALENKO!
JUMBO TSURUTA! and STAN HANSEN! beat the living dogcrap outta each other.

ALOHA~!

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #54!

Today was a big day, as I rearranged some furniture and ate a whole bunch of cookies. Oh. And Dr. Katz comes on during the day sometimes too. To quote the immortal Go-Gos- "Vacation. All I ever wanted. Vacation. Oh got to get away." :))

I've been bulling my way through two months of Porno Azteca and I'm starting to dig it the most, since a.) the best guys are sometimes not their most famous WCW-based guys and b.) everybody beats the hell out of the scrawny Super Elektra. So far I have seen a guy finally go backfirst into the fixed chairs after getting topped and recieving a less than beautiful cut in the real hurty part of the small of the back, and I've seen a lot of guys I need to figure out the names of, because they all do cool armdrags and as soon as I get all that straight I'll report on it proper.:)

!@!@!@!@! BEST OF JAPAN 1989, VOLS. IV- VI

Remember a while ago I said I was gonna dissect parts of this tape that Doug sent me? Well, here it is and they you go and there you have it. The first match is Stan Hansen against Jumbo Tsuruta and GOD! do they beat the living shit outta each other. Hansen just potatoes the crap outta Tsuruta and Tsuruta stomps the crap outta Hansen. Hansen does the super dickish GIANT elbow across the throat to which Jumbo responds by punching Hansen dead in his fat ugly face. This goes out of the ring and they beat the hell out of each other with chairs and they basically maul each other until the ref stops the match. They, of course, continue to break everything they can get their hands on until they go to commercial. This is Phil Schneider's favorite match off this tape and we discussed it and I was able to con him into thinking I liked the Takada vs Yamazaki UWF masterpiece a little more, but I'm lying to myself- this match is just TOO stiff and TOO amazingly violent for me to quibble about things like technique. Tsuruta was SO freakin great and Hansen was SO freakin great. It was like a bear mauling but it was beautiful because it was wrestling so it was better than art. Then the rematch is shown and it isn't what the first one was, in that they take it to the mat and they wrestle and stuff, which is cool because it is different than the previous encounter, but I didn't fear for anyones life in this match.

Vader vs. Shinya Hashimoto was not nearly as good as it should have been. It was a good wrestling match in every traditional sense of a match but after watching the Tsuruta and Hansen matches and Considering that this was Vader before he got old and not good and then there is freakin Shinya Hashimoto, one would come to expect a veritable mountain of stiffnes, delivered with gusto, until one of these big boys dropped. Instead we get the highflying Vader hitting a dropkick. Good but still disappointing.

Atsushi Onita vs. Ryuma Go is neat because it has Onita before he ruined his knee and stuff, but it also has Ryuma Go, the King of Pioneer Wrestling, and this match goes on for eternity. Neither of these guys are gonna make you swear off of Sakuraba with their half-assed brand of shoot-wrestling. And there is a big batch of blood. And, CRIPES! does this match NOT END.

Jushin Liger vs. Hiroshi Hase was absolutely great, despite the horror of what Liger is wearing (the Monkeyboy outfit). Hase is the greatest wrestler in New Japan at this point and he supplies the goods hitting all the moves that Malenko stole from him and perfected. Liger is spunky and tough and flew a whole lot back then. I don't recall a giant swing so maybe this was the perfectest Hase match ever. DON'T GIVE AWAY THE INCREDIBLE ENDING!

Akira Maeda vs. Nobuhiko Takada is fukcin Akira Maeda vs Nobuhiku Takada. Takada works for the crushing suplex to set up kicking the crap out of Maeda. Maeda works to set up the cross-armbreaker by kicking the crap out of Takada. This is about as awe-inspiringly fast, complex and stiff as you can possibly want. I dunno. It's at a different plane than other wrestler and even other shoot wrestling you are wont to see. These two are the only ones capable of having a match as intricate and deep and all-encompassing, yet shootstyle simple as this match. Both of these guys might be the best wrestlers of this generation, because this is Pro Style wrestling taken to such a beautiful and esoteric extreme and they execute it with such flawless verve and gusto you gotta be in awe of it all.

Joe Malenko and Dean Malenko go at it and, for some reason, THEY TAKE IT TO THE MAT! Tee-Hee! Joe is kind of a bigger stronger power version of his brother and yet they both have pretty flawless pro-style mat technique so one can argue that Joe would be better because he was bigger. Joe hits some suplexes early and then it really slows down to leglocks and wristlocks. Dean gets all highflying on his sangre to differentiate the two (okay, maybe Dean was better) and does a lot of lucha stuff that I was figuring he had picked up recently to suddenly work with Luchadores on WCW but Au Contraire. Hell, I'm guessing Dean has always been the most technically sound North American wrestler in every style and he just kinda didn't show everything in his New Japan-exclusive tenure because he didn't need to use it like he did when he was suddenly facing the straight Lucha of Rey Misterio Jr and Psicosis. The more you learn, the more you realize that PWI got it right for once.

\$%\$%\$%\$ EXTREME CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING- TV Late July through Early August.
^&^&^&^ USWA TV- Late July and Early August.

My ECW and USWA TV connection, Walt, sent me these babies and its as hit and miss as major indie wrestling usually is. The best match was in USWA when masked Rex King and the steroidically-deflated Paul Diamond took on Steve Doll and Flash Flanagan in a high-flying little affair that was about the best usage of the workers of the highly troubled promotion that I have seen. King did those flying kicks to the corner to give his identity away. Flanagan would be a good addition to the on-again-off-again WWF Light Heavyweight Division- in that he is technically sound and flies pretty well. Diamond is having a minor miracle of a comeback. He is still a good worker, even without the chemical assist, and he wouldn't look too bad as having

some roll in the big two. Cane was stinking up USWA rings as Doomsday weeks before he was ruining perfect cage matches at Titan. Speaking of Titan! Rick Titan trashes the Razor Ramone gimmick and takes a face turn right on TV. Now if only he was a better worker, I would care more. And Doug Gilbert did one of the best interviews I've ever heard ever during the 53 hours he was in USWA.

ECW served up the usual spotty wrestling, booked sixty ways to Sunday, to show that they STILL haven't found anyone to carry guys the way that 2 Cold Scorpio did. The best match of this batch is the Full Blooded Italians (still my current favorite gimmick circulating around the world) Tracy Smothers and Little Guido took on Spike Dudley and Chris Chetti. All these guys can work and this was a good little match. The ending was truly hideous as Tommy Rich was pinned for some reason and they counted it. Gimme a break. Chetti and Guido are gonna be the shit. TAZ continues to be the chattiest wrestler on earth and his match against Sabu- the rematch from Hardcore Heaven- was much less than the very okay match they had on that inaugural PPV. TAZ can't take bumps and his suplexes aren't that cool. Welcome to hell as another Heyman creation is slowly exposed as each match is wrestled. Sabu looks great in the suit though and he should definitely go whole-hog Sheikhlake. Van Dam vs Tommy Dreamer was a couple of matches that weren't horrible by any stretch, but neither really knew what it wanted to accomplish. If it would have gone full garbage match, it would have helped, because Dreamer isn't athletic enough to wrestle the highly specialized style (and when you do get somebody who can wrestle the Van Dam style match, it still isn't all that earth shattering) though Dreamer tries WAAAY too hard- doing all of Van Dam's spots and hitting an actually kinda cool Frog splash. If it played more into Dreamer's hand and it became a double hell death match or something, at least we'd get a chance to see Dreamer beat the crap out of the prancing little pantywaist.:) Al Snow vs Shane Douglas was about as good as I expected it to be. Shane Douglas is so unflashy and Al Snow is so technically proficient that Snow really dumbed the match down in terms of moves attempted usually by Snow, but the psychology was thickened up so it didn't hurt too bad. Douglas had one cool move with neck-wrenching forward flip over the back move (SEE! I told you it was cool.:)) The main problem with this match- and considering what could have gone wrong, this will be real nitpicking- is that they work off of Douglas's attempts to get to his finisher and Snow countering it, getting an escape from it, and surviving the application of it- which is great psychology and made the match really sound in that aspect, but there was two things wrong- 1.) of course, Douglas' belly to belly suplex is JUST LAME as a finisher, and 2.) Snow doesn't really have an over finisher that anyone can remember (GOD! How long has it been since he got stranded and wasted in Titan?) so they couldn't work it the other way, like these type of matches usually work the best. Overall, though, there was very little to quibble about. Douglas is wrestling his way out of my doghouse and that Pitbull II match is almost forgiven.:)

TOMORROW: All the Lucha I started watching today! All that WAR I put off watching today and MAYBE THAT DAMN RINGS TAPE! VOLK HAN! VOLK HAN! VOLK HAN!

NANIWA~!

Dean Rasmussen, who loves it when Blue Panther takes it to the mat.